

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR SECURE COMMUNICATIONS WITH NETWORK PRINTERS

ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

5 A system and method are provided for secure
communications to a network-connected printer. The method
comprises: receiving documents encrypted with a public key; spooling
the encrypted documents into a printer memory; accepting a private
key corresponding to the public key used to encrypt the documents;
10 in response to accepting the private key, generating a list of
documents encrypted with a corresponding public key; creating a
graphical user interface (GUI) dialog box to invoke the selection of an
encrypted document; decrypting the documents with the private key;
and, printing the decrypted documents in response to selecting a
15 document. The printer has a card reader to read code from SMART
cards, and accepting a private key includes using the code read by the
card reader as the private key. Alternately, the printer has a
keyboard interface to accept an alpha-numeric code. Then, the
method further comprises: storing the private keys in the printer;
20 creating a table in the printer to cross-reference private keys with
alpha-numeric codes. Then, the private key referenced by the entered
alpha-numeric code is used.